

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-32 are presently active in this case, Claims 7-10 and 24-32 previously withdrawn from consideration.

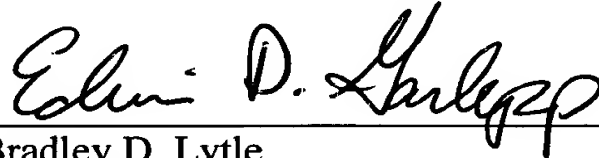
In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-6 and 11-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by the publication to Shimizu et al.; Claims 4-6 and 11-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimizu et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,566,688 and Zhang et al.

Turning now to the merits, Applicants note that the Shimizu et al. reference has a publication date of August 3, 2000, which is after the Japanese filing date of JP 2000-230553 to which the present application claims foreign priority 2. In order to expedite issuance of a patent in this case, filed herewith is a certified translation of JP 2000-230553, which perfects priority in the present application to the date of July 31, 2000. Therefore, Shimizu et al. is no longer prior art to the present application. As Shimizu et al. was used in the outstanding Official Action, as an anticipatory reference under 102(a), and as a primary reference under 103(a), Applicants respectfully submit that elimination of this reference as prior art overcomes the rejection in the outstanding Official Action.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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